

REMARKS-General

1. The previously presented independent claims 58 incorporates all structural limitations of the previously presented claim 58 and include further limitations previously brought forth in the disclosure. No new matter has been included. All claims 58, and 60-69 are submitted to be of sufficient clarity and detail to enable a person of average skill in the art to make and use the instant invention, so as to be pursuant to 35 USC 112.

2. With regard to the rejection of record based on prior art, Applicant will advance arguments to illustrate the manner in which the invention defined by the newly introduced claims is patentably distinguishable from the prior art of record. Reconsideration of the present application is requested.

Response to Rejection of Claims 58-69 under 35USC103

3. The Examiner rejected claims 58, 59 and 67 over Stanford (US 6,112,674) in view of Pinch (US 6,058,853) and Palmer (US 4,825,781). Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 103:

“(a) A patent may not be obtained thought the invention is **not identically** disclosed or described as set forth in **section 102 of this title**, if the **differences** between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the **subject matter as a whole would have been obvious** at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.”

4. In view of 35 U.S.C. 103(a), it is apparent that to be qualified as a prior art under 35USC103(a), the prior art must be cited under 35USC102(a)~(g) but the disclosure of the prior art and the invention are not identical and there are one or more differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art. In addition, such differences between the subject matter sought to be patented **as a whole** and the prior art are obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the subject matter pertains.

5. In other words, the differences between the subject matter sought to be patent as a whole of the instant invention and Stanford which is qualified as prior art of the instant invention under 35USC102(b) are obvious in view of Pinch and Palmer at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the subject matter pertains.

6. The applicant respectfully submits that the differences between the instant invention and Stanford are not obvious in view of Pinch and Palmer under 35USC103(a), due to the following reasons:

(A) Regarding the newly amended independent claim 58, the examiner is of the view that it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the tabletop of Stanford by adding a receiving track as taught by Pinch in order to provide a more secure mounting means for the table supports. The applicant disagrees, and would like to point out that Stanford and Pinch fail to anticipate that a banquet table comprising a tabletop and a pair of table supporting frames which comprises a leg frame and a supporting arms, wherein each of the supporting arms has a upper supporting portion forming a L-shaped structure extended underneath the tabletop to form a **double mid reinforcing structure** for the tabletop. Since there are two table supporting frames mounted underneath the two upper supporting portions form a **double mid reinforcing structure** at the mid-portion of the tabletop. In Stanford, the retaining assembly (36) includes a cross member (Stanford, Col. 4, Lines 30-31) which may be seen as providing a mid-support to the tabletop, yet it is an **additional component for providing a single support**. In the instant invention, however, the upper supporting portions (i.e. the supporting arms) are directly connected to the leg frames which facilitate **even and effective distribution of loading** from the tabletop to the leg frame so as to **maximize** the mid support ability of the respective supporting arm. These unexpected features have not been anticipated in Stanford or Pinch, or a combination of both.

(B) The examiner is of the view that Stanford teaches a double T-shaped support at the middle of the table. Moreover, by replacing the T-shaped supports with a pair of L-shaped supports, the examiner asserts, the combination of Stanford and Palmer form an equivalent structure of the instant invention. The applicant respectfully disagrees. The applicant respectfully points out that nothing in Stanford support the

assertion by the examiner. There is not such a double T-shaped support at the middle of the table in Stanford. Referring to Fig. 2 of Stanford patent, the only component which supports the mid-support of the tabletop is the cross brace member (36). The examiner can at most argue that there exist the cross brace member (36) and two pivotal support braces (24, 30) extending towards two opposed sides of the cross brace member (36), yet this structure is different from two **separate** T-structures forming a double mid reinforcing structure disclosed in the instant invention. In Stanford, the 'T-structures' asserted by the examiner share a common element (i.e. the cross brace member (36)), whereas in the instant invention, the two mid reinforcing structure shares **completely separate and different** structural elements (i.e. the upper supporting portion and lower retention portions of each of the supporting arms).

(C) The disadvantages of the structural design disclosed in Stanford are that the so-called "double T-structure" as identified by the examiner does not share the reinforcement ability as that of the double mid-reinforcing structure recited in the previous presented independent claim 58. This can easily be observed when one considers a particular situation in which a particular load is exerted in the mid-portion of the tabletop. In Stanford, the loading will be transmitted immediately to the leg frames via the cross brace member (36) and the two pivotal support braces (24, 30) without significant distribution of loading by the tabletop itself (this can also be explained by the fact that the cross brace member (36) is positioned right underneath the **middle point** of the tabletop). As a result, the connection between the cross brace member (36) and the tabletop and the connection between the pivotal support braces (24, 30) and the cross brace member (36) are most vulnerable to be broken by the loading exerted, since the tabletop itself does not significantly assist in distributing the loading over a relatively larger surface area of the tabletop. On the other hand, when the same loading is exerted on the banquet table recited in claim 58, the loading will be evenly transmitted to the supporting arms via the **mid portion** of the tabletop, with the structural reinforcement provided by the upper supporting portions of the supporting arms. In other words, the banquet table and the corresponding double mid-reinforcing structure are capable of bearing a larger amount of loading with in comparison with Stanford.

(D) Moreover, Stanford and Pinch fail to anticipate that the banquet table comprises a tabletop having a **surrounding rim** downwardly extended from the edge portion thereof, wherein the surrounding rim has an outer sidewall and an inner sidewall to define the receiving track **between the outer sidewall and the inner sidewall** under the top panel along the respective side edge portion thereof to **completely receive** the respective tabletop support **within** the receiving track in such a manner that the tabletop supports are adapted for being securely affixed in the receiving tracks respectively. The applicant respectfully points out that element 166 of Pinch patent is referred to as "first hinge plate" (Pinch, Col. 9, Lines 47-55), which is obviously not equivalent to "table supports" as claimed by the examiner. On the other hand, the reinforcing cover (156) disclosed in Pinch is affixed **onto** the respective support rail (152) (Pinch, Fig. 10). The implication is that although Pinch may teach a receiving track formed between the support rail (152) and the outer perimetral rim (176), the reinforcing cover (156) is obviously **not** received within the receiving track. When the tabletop support is received within the receiving track, it can be easily affixed on **two sidewalls** (i.e. the outer sidewall and the inner sidewall) of the receiving track by conventional connectors **in a very secure manner** so as to strengthen the overall structural integrity of the banquet table. Referring to Fig. 4 of Pinch's patent, it seems that the reinforcing cover (156) is affixed **onto** the respective support rail (152) at a bottom surface thereof (because there exists a plurality of spacedly apart holes formed onto the reinforcing cover 156 and the support rail 152), yet in Fig. 10, one can clearly see that the support rail (152) is hollow in structure. Therefore, it is impossible to lock any conventional connecting members **from within** the supporting rail (152). As a result, the attachment between the support rail (152) and the reinforcing cover (156) cannot be secure enough to allow the reinforcing cover (156) to provide structural support to the tabletop to any significant extent.

(E) The examiner argues that Pinch teaches an inner (152) and an outer (176) sidewall, wherein the two walls define a receiving track so that the table support is received within the track and is securely affixed there. This is only partially true. Although there are two supporting rails (152, 176) defining a "receiving track" therebetween, it is by no means clear that the table support is completely "received" within the track. Rather, it is clear from Fig. 9 and Fig. 10 of Pinch that the reinforcing covers (156) are merely **riding** on the respective inner supporting rail (152) and

therefore they are **NOT** completely received with any receiving track defined between the supporting rails (152, 176).

(F) The examiner is of the view that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the support of Stanford with the support in Palmer in order to provide more structural rigidity to the tabletop and to provide more legroom under the table. The applicant disagrees. As mentioned in Paragraphs (A) and (B) above, the banquet table provides a double mid reinforcing structure to the tabletop to facilitate **even and effective distribution of loading** from the tabletop to the leg frame so as to **maximize** the mid support ability of the respective supporting arm. These have not been disclosed in Stanford and Palmer.

(G) Although Palmer provides L-shaped arms for supporting the tabletop (Palmer, Fig. 2), the leg frames are not foldable (Palmer, Fig. 2). Thus, Palmer has to **sacrifice** the foldable feature of the leg frames for a mid-support arrangement. Moreover, there exists a substantial portion of the tabletop (C) which is not supported by the U-shaped sub-members (1), notably the edge portions between each two U-shaped sub-members (1) of the tabletop (C). Thus, when the size of the tabletop increases, the loading exerted on the tabletop cannot be evenly and effectively distributed to the U-shaped sub-members (1) so that flipping of the entire tabletop (C) occurs very easily, especially when the loading is exerted on a side or edge portion of the tabletop (C).

(H) Regarding claim 67, Stanford, Pinch and Palmer fail to anticipate that each of the supporting means further comprises a ring-shaped locker slidably mounted to the supporting arms along the retention portions thereof for locking up the supporting arms with the folding frame at the unfolded position, and in addition to what is claimed in the newly amended independent claim 58 as a whole.

7. The examiner rejected claims 60, 61, 65 and 68 as being unpatentable over Stanford (US 6,112,674) as modified as applied to claim 59, and further in view of Witkowiak (US 2,695,828) and Pinch. The applicant respectfully submits that the differences between the instant invention and Stanford are not obvious in view of Witkowiak and Pinch under 35USC103(a), due to the following reasons:

(I) Regarding the newly amended claim 60, the examiner is of the view that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Stanford by using an attachment arrangement taught by Witkowiak to provide a more secure mounting means. Moreover, the examiner is also of the view that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the inner sidewalls of Stanford by using guiding slots taught by Pinch, and to modify the tabletop of Stanford by using a folding tabletop taught in Pinch in order to produce the instant invention. The applicant must point out that Stanford, Witkowiak and Pinch fail to anticipate that the banquet table further comprises an attachment arrangement which comprises four attachment members and four coupling members, wherein the four attaching members are spacedly and transversely extended from the two tabletop supports through the inner sidewalls respectively to rotatably insert into outer ends of the leg frame respectively so as to pivotally connect the leg frames with the top panel, and wherein the four coupling members are spacedly and transversely extended from the two tabletop supports through the inner sidewall respectively to rotatably insert into the outer ends of the four supporting arms so as to pivotally connect the supporting arms with the top panel, in addition to what is claimed in the newly amended independent claim 58 as a whole.

(J) Regarding claim 61, Stanford, Witkowiak and Pinch fail to anticipate that the top panel further has a plurality of guiding slots spacedly formed on the inner sidewall of the surrounding rim to respectively align with the attachment members and the coupling members such that the attachment members and the coupling members are extended through the guiding slots to couple with the leg frame and the supporting arms respectively, in addition to what is claimed in the newly amended independent claim 58 as a whole.

(K) Regarding claim 65, Stanford, Witkowiak and Pinch fail to anticipate that the tabletop further comprises a folding joint formed at the tabletop at a position between the supporting portions of the two table supporting frames, wherein the top panel defines two side panels rotatably mounted with each other via the folding joint in such a manner that the side panels are adapted to fold in an overlapped manner, in addition to what is claimed in the newly amended independent claim 58 as a whole.

(L) Regarding claim 68, Stanford, Witkowiak and Pinch fail to anticipate that each of the supporting means further comprises a ring-shaped locker slidably mounted to the supporting arms along the retention portions thereof for locking up the supporting arms with the folding frame at the unfolded position, in addition to what is claimed in the newly amended independent claim 58 as a whole.

8. The examiner rejected claims 62, 63, 66 and 69 as being unpatentable over Stanford (US 6,112,674) as applied to claim 59, and further in view of Pinch. The applicant respectfully submits that the differences between the instant invention and Stanford are not obvious in view of Pinch under 35USC103(a), due to the following reasons:

(M) Regarding claim 62, Stanford and Pinch fail to anticipate that the banquet table comprising an attachment arrangement which contains four attachment holes and four coupling holes, wherein the four attaching holes are spacedly provided at the two tabletop supports at two side portions of the top panel for outer ends of the leg frame to rotatably insert thereinto respectively so as to pivotally connect the leg frames with the top panel, and wherein the four coupling holes are spacedly provided at the two tabletop supports respectively for the outer ends of the four supporting arms to rotatably insert thereinto respectively so as to pivotally connect the supporting arms with the top panel, in such a manner that a loading on the top panel is evenly distributed on the leg frames via the attachment arrangement, in addition to what is claimed in the newly drafted claim 58 as a whole.

(N) Regarding claim 63, Stanford and Pinch fail to anticipate that the top panel further has a plurality of guiding slots spacedly formed on the inner sidewall of the surrounding rim to respectively align with the attachment holes and the coupling holes such that the tabletop supports are connected to the leg frames and the supporting arms via the attachment arrangement through the guiding slots of the top panel, in addition to what is claimed in the newly drafted claim 58 as a whole.

(O) Regarding claim 66, Stanford and Pinch fail to anticipate that the tabletop further comprises a folding joint formed at the tabletop at a position between the supporting portions of the two table supporting frames, wherein the top panel defines two side panels rotatably mounted with each other via the folding joint in such a manner

that the side panels are adapted to fold in an overlapped manner, in addition to what is claimed in the newly drafted claim 58 as a whole.

(P) Regarding claim 69, Stanford and Pinch fail to anticipate that each of the supporting means further comprises a ring-shaped locker slidably mounted to the supporting arms along the retention portions thereof for locking up the supporting arms with the folding frame at the unfolded position, in addition to what is claimed in the newly drafted claim 58 as a whole.

(Q) Regarding claim 64, Stanford and Pinch fail to anticipate that the tabletop further comprises a folding joint formed at the tabletop at a position between the supporting portions of the two table supporting frames, wherein the top panel defines two side panels rotatably mounted with each other via the folding joint in such a manner that the side panels are adapted to fold in an overlapped manner, in addition to what is claimed in the newly drafted claim 58 as a whole.

The Cited but Non-Applied References

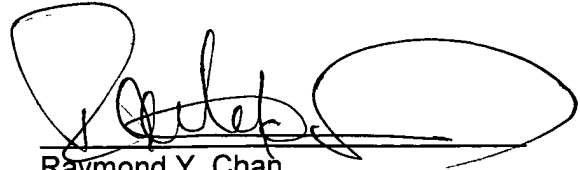
9. The cited but not relied upon references have been studied and are greatly appreciated, but are deemed to be less relevant than the relied upon references.

10. In view of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are requested. Allowance of claims 58 and 60 to 69 at an early date is solicited.

11. A fee in an amount of US\$405.00 is submitted herewith to pay the fee for Request for Continued Examination (RCE). This amount is believed to be correct. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 502111.

12. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is needed in order to place the application in condition for allowance, he is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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